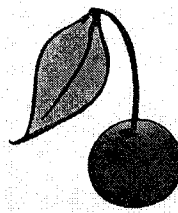


EXHIBIT 2  
DATE 2/14/09  
HB 583



Albert & Lise Rousseau Silva  
Fat Robin Orchard & Farm  
34126 S Finley Point Road  
Polson MT 59860  
406.887.2869

February 17, 2009

Rep. Jon Sesso, Chairman,  
Montana House Appropriations Committee and Members of the House Appropriations  
Committee

Re: HB583

Dear Committee Members:

I am writing to you today in support of Montana's Ag Innovation Centers, also known as Bio-Product Innovation Centers. My contact with these vital centers has been with the Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center (MMFEC).

As a commercial cherry grower, we are always seeking opportunities to grow our business. Especially in today's economy, it just makes sense to try to diversify what you market as much as possible, without diluting your capacity to do things well. We are proud of growing high quality certified organic fruit which the MMFEC helps us turn into high quality certified organic value-added products. Through them we are exploring expanding our efforts into additional products, and their expertise and kitchen facilities have been invaluable. We simply could not do what we are doing without MMFEC.

As we grow, so do our opportunities grow in contributing back to our local community and economy through creating jobs, paying taxes, supporting other local businesses with our commerce, etc. If the MMFEC were forced to reduce its offerings or close its doors, our business would surely suffer.

In a time when jobs are scarce, local economies suffering, and even the availability of good wholesome food may be in jeopardy, it is right to give these centers of innovation and growth our full support.

I strongly urge you to give full support to funding food and agriculture innovation centers as detailed in HB583.

Thank you for your time and attention,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Lise Rousseau Silva.

Lise Rousseau Silva

Thunderhead LLC.  
P.O. BOX 96  
Arlee, Montana, 59821

As a small farmer in western Montana, I have been seeking ways to increase the sustainability of my farm so that it can survive and actually thrive. Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center has been the answer to my farms' viability problem. With the help and guidance of the staff at MMFEC, I have created a value-added product with crops raised on my farm. MMFEC has assisted me with all aspects of training, planning, and execution of my value-added product idea, from inception to conclusion. MMFEC is such an important cog in the alternative agricultural economy and has helped to create viable business' that contribute greatly to both local and state-wide economies. The need for funding at MMFEC is absolutely imperative! Without business incubators like MMFEC, our state will lag behind other states in the creation of new small business' that are agriculturally based, and that should not happen! MMFEC has a proven track record in helping small business' and farms realize their dreams, and these business' contribute proudly to the growth of Montana's economy. With state funding, MMFEC can continue to help local farmers and small business' grow and increase the successful entrepreneurship that Montana is so widely known for. My business and product would not be a reality without the expertise of the staff of Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joel Ahr Carlson", written over the printed name.

Joel Ahr Carlson

North Frontier Farms, Inc.  
Ole Norgaard  
762 Danvers Rd.  
Lewistown, Mt. 59457  
406-538-3607

February 18, 2009

**TO: Rep. Jon Sesso, Chairman, House Appropriations Committee and  
Members of the House Appropriations Committee**

**RE: HB583 Fund Food and Agriculture Innovation Centers**

I am writing to express my support of HB 583, for Montana's Ag Innovation Centers. I am a farmer that have developed some special cornbread mixes, and after nearly 3 years of work laying the foundation regarding everything from producing of the special corn, labels, milling, processing it and packed it into a retail package, I am about ready to start production. I have had help form these centers to get the idea up and running and I will be utilizing the center in Ronan to do the packing for me. By being able to utilize the center in Ronan, I don't have to invest in my own packing line and building right up front, I would have the time to start slowly and build up the sales and see if my idea works before investing over \$100,000 in my own packing line.

My infrastructure/transportation in regards to my cornbread mixes, are big. I am farming by Lewistown, the clearing and milling of the product is going to take place in Ulm by Great Falls, and the packing in the center in Ronan. This is the only way I can get started, and sometimes when "one" have a good idea "one" goes the extra mile to make it happen. By having centers around the state, it will help people with good ideas to produce more value added food here in Montana.

Thank you for your consideration of funding Montana food and agriculture innovation centers as detailed in HB583.

Sincerely, Ole Norgaard

**Lake County  
Community Development Corporation**

EXHIBIT 2  
DATE 2/19/09  
HB 583

*Certified Regional Development Corporation/Western Rural Development Region*

February 19, 2009

To: Rep. Jon Sesso, Chairman, House Appropriations Committee and Members of the House Appropriation Committee

RE: HB583 Food and Ag Development Centers

This letter is in support of HB583 that would continue the work of the Ag Innovation Center Program and Bio-Products Innovation Center Program. Both programs have provided essential support to the clients of Lake County Community Development Corp. and the Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center, a food business incubator that serves food business and value added enterprises statewide. In 2008 the clients of the Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center were surveyed on the impact of the program. Thirty clients responded and indicated that the technical assistance provided to them was essential to the development of their food enterprise. Their businesses created **40 jobs** and generated **\$1,472,520.00** in sales. They indicated that the ability to access processing infrastructure and technical assistance was key to their success in the marketplace. Several clients have "graduated" into their own facilities. Please find attached a history of clients that have been provided technical assistance, access to a processing facility and assisted in the capitalization of their businesses.

While we understand the constraints of the General Fund Budget, it is important to consider the investments that have been made to date through the Ag Innovation Center Program (\$1,000,000), the Bio-Product Innovation Center Program (\$400,000) and local and private investments. The funding of this program will support our economic development investments and insure we continue to develop our agriculture, food and farm energy opportunities for Montana.

Sincerely,



Jan Tusick- Manager  
Ag Enterprise and Cooperative Development Program  
Certified Cooperative Development Specialist

The Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center has assisted food entrepreneurs and value added agriculture clients since its inception in 1999. The clients listed below demonstrate the statewide impact the facility has contributed to in food processing. To date there have been several clients “graduate”.

Amazing Grains LLC- owns a facility in Pablo, MT

Western Montana Growers Cooperative- owns a facility in Dixon, MT

Brentari Foods LLC- processes in a privately owned facility in Lolo, MT

Farm to Table Cooperative- owns a facility in Glendive, MT

Great Northern Growers Cooperative- owns a facility in Sunburst, MT

Garden City Salsa- processes in a privately owned facility in Lolo, MT

Montana Salsa- processes in a privately owned facility in Lolo, MT

US Omega III- owns facility in Lolo, MT

Flathead Cheese Company- building own facility in Polson, MT

Gluten Free Mama- owns a facility in Polson, MT.

The resources needed to support an incubator food processing facility are substantial. A typical client that comes in the door with a food business idea or recipe takes approximately 100 hours of technical assistance to support them in the development of their food business. This does not include the cost to support the infrastructure and operation of a processing facility. Of the clients assisted during the past two years, 73% are producing a food product and are currently selling in the food marketplace.

Clients assisted in the last two years	Location
<b>Dry Fill Room</b>	
-Prairie Industries - packaged soup mixes	Glendive
- Steve Simonson- Big Sky Tea Gourmet teas	Thompson Falls
-West Paw – Cat Nip	Bozeman
-Thomas McInnes – Masterblend Spices	Hamilton
-John Knight – Knights BBQ spices	Lakeside
-Mark Feasel Fisherman Favorite	Superior
-Scott Haeffner- Rocky Mountain Gold Dust Dry Spices	Butte
-Becky Fessler - Custom Dining Products	Bozeman
-Hi-Country mixes - jerky spice mixes	Lincoln
- Sandra McIntyre - teas	Eureka
<b>Large Processing Line</b>	
- Brentari Foods– Fresh Salsa, shelf stable salsa, 4 hot sauces	Missoula
- Tipus - chai tea, honey, chutney	Missoula
- Paddy Fleming, Flathead Winery,- fruit wines	West Glacier
- Oso Loco - 12 sauces	Whitefish
- Scott Haffner - 4 sauces (Endorsed by Rocky Mtn Elk Foundation)	Butte
- Papa Dons– BBQ sauce, BBQ Beans	Polson
- Mama Petes- Pasta Sauce	West Yellowstone
- Nick Harvey - salad Dressing	Kalispell / Helena
-Zac Kellerman - Montana Kitchen Sauces	Livingston
-Richard Kranie - Red Caboose Foods	Whitefish
-Dave Max - Organic camelina	Missoula
-Mark Smith - bottled specialty oils	Spokane
-Sustainable Systems - bottled canola oil	Culbertson
-Prairie Industries - BBQ sauce	Glendive
- Keith Baker- Garlic Head Sauces	Lakeside

-Roberta Knapp- Montana Salsa	Helena
-Superior Meats- BBQ sauce	Superior
<b>Kitchen Rental</b>	
- Myni Ferguson - Pickles	Kalispell
- Beth Cogswell – Garden City Salsa	Missoula
- Heidi Johnson-Orchard at the Flathead – Cherry Jams, syrups, BBQ sauce	Yellow Bay
- Maureen Foley - Chocolate Sauce	Kalispell
- Joel Carlson - Raspberry Chipolte Sauce	Moiese
- Tammy Baumberger Spiced Pretzels	St. Ignatius
- Starla Gade - Fresh Salsa, Shelf stable salsa	Arlee
- Neil Meyer - BBQ Sauce	Missoula
- Terri Roberts – Hummus	Missoula
- Pig Sky Candies	Hungry Horse
- Zeynap Martello	Bozeman
-Tom/Lynn McCormant, Forbidden Fruits Orchard, - jams, fruit sauces	Missoula
-Amber Yoi- sauces	Missoula
- Susan Alexander- salsa	Victor
<b>Dehydration Room</b>	
- Ed Grizeik- Ramrock Orchards - Dried Cherries	Bigfork
-Lise Rousouee- Fat Robin Orchard - Dried and frozen cherries	Polson
-Heidi Johnson- Orchard at the Flathead - Dried and frozen cherries	Yellow Bay
<b>USDA Meat Room/Depot</b>	
- Uncle Bills Sausage - Gourmet Sausage	Missoula
- Superior Meats – beef and bison jerky	Superior
- Montana Natural Beef LLC- retail, wholes natural beef	Dixon
- Silent Creations Jerky- retail buffalo jerky	Ronan
<b>Gluten Free Processing</b>	
- Amazing Grains LLC- Indian Rice grass flour blends	Pablo
- Barb Champlin –Gluten Free frozen dough mixes for pizza and bread	Missoula
<b>Consulting Projects</b>	
- US Omega 3- mobile processing of camalina oil	Missoula
- Timeless Seed, Inc.	Conrad
- Big Sky Organics	Helena
- Joe Arnold- Flathead Cheese Company	Polson
<b>Cooperative Statewide Projects/Consulting</b>	
- Montana Poultry Growers Cooperative - mobile processing unit	Statewide
- Great Northern Growers Cooperative- mobile camalina processing	Statewide
- Western Montana Growers Cooperative-	Western MT
- Montana Organic Producers Cooperative	Statewide
- Flathead Cherry Growers Cooperative	Flathead Lake

Past Clients	Location
<b>Dry Fill Room</b>	
- Big Horn Botanicals	Thompson Falls
- Vince Furst Enterprises	Bozeman
<b>Large Processing Line</b>	
- Bar 3 BBQ sauce- Becky Hill	Bozeman
- Geri Cochran- Deadeye Weedkiller	Columbia Falls
- Sophies Orchard- apple cider	Arlee
- Dupuis Orchard- apple & cherry cider	Polson
- Bowman Orchard- apple cider	Yellow Bay
<b>Kitchen Rental</b>	
- Annies Organics- distributing company	Polson
- Cowboy Foods- BBQ sauce	Bozeman
-Cherry Apple Farm- Bosco Cembaliski- apple sauce	Corvallis
-Edible Flowers- Heidi Foley- vinaigrettes	Missoula
- Rob Ferrel- East West Seafood- crabcakes	Ronan
-Grandma Hoots- Joyce Previte- pickles, relishes	Kalispell
-Lolo Creek- mustard product	Missoula
- Montana Sweet Heat- honey products	Polson
- Sauce it- Bette Gose- sauces	Missoula
<b>Dehydration Room</b>	
- Stacy Goodman- Stacys Stuff- goat milk soap	Stevensville
<b>USDA Meat Room/Depot</b>	
- Flathead Native Ag Cooperative- jerky, beef stick	Pablo
- Montana Buffalo Outfit	Butte
- Paradise Valley Meats- Del Morris	Paradise
<b>Gluten Free Processing</b>	
- Gluten Free Mama- gluten free flour products	Polson
<b>Consulting Projects</b>	
-Lee McAlpine- Montana Cider Works	Darby
- Cream of the West-	Harlowtown
- Bill Haflinger- Camalina grower	Moiese
- Buffalo Gals- Chris Sullivan	Dixon
- Common Ground Farm- market produce	Arlee
- Foust Farm- potatoes	Moiese
- Gilgal Farms- free range chickens	St. Ignatius
- Jeff Wilson- Camalina grower	Missoula
- Leroy Miller- LAM processing	St. Ignatius
- Shelia Reidesel- Blueberry grower	Yellow Bay
- Ronan Farmers Market	Ronan
-Phyllis Grana- Chewies	Billings
- Dwayne Nelson- Elk Creek	Lewistown
- Theresa Olson- jam	Polson
- John Herak- Buffalo Hills Inc.	Dixon
- Thomas Hopp- Thomas Gourmet Spices	Marion
- Cherri Houle- Cherrie's Kitchen	Ronan
- Sister Johnelle Howanach- Lissi Luv Yums	Great Falls
-Dee Jorgeson- Sacagewea Syrup	Lewistown
- Raylene Katana- Salsa Makin'	Trout Creek

- Gerralyn Kenish- Mountain Man Candies	Missoula
-Tracy Pabst- Eat me Cookies	Polson
- Bill Lincoln- Bulldog Pub	Whitefish
-Alison Lograsso- Ruby Mountain Baking	Gallatin Gateway
- Bill Mathews- BBQ wagon	Thompson Falls
-Neil Meyer- Neils Homemade Sauces	Missoula
-Jean Powers- Salad Dressing Co.	Darby
-Darcy Stearns- Montana Organics	Missoula
- Patsy TiHish- Garden Gate Salad Dressing	Missoula
- Brian Swathout- Natural Candy	Sula
- Lori Beck- Herbs	Missoula
-Gloria Bianco- Season Mix	Missoula
-Valli Bigley- Liquid Louies	Condon
- Eva Jo Burrington- Soaps and Lotions	Kalispell
-Effe Clairmont- Candy	Polson
-Patsy Cunningham- Cunningham BBQ	Conner
- Robin Edward- Saucy Wench	Missoula
-Starla Gade- salsa	Missoula
-Robin Swan- Barking Dog Desserts	Hot Springs
-Kevin Gownley- Tamale product	Bigfork
-Jane Gore- The Bon Ton	Lewiston
-Destiny Trevino- Trevino Tamales	Billings
-Jack Wilkerson- Buck Snort Restaurant	Missoula
-John Williams- Bitterroot Bakery	Hamilton
- Bud Zempal- camalina grower	Charlo
<b>Cooperative Statewide Projects/Consulting</b>	
- Peaks & Prairie LLC	statewide